

AN
ANSWER
TO THE
Animadversions
ON TWO
PAMPHLETS

Lately Publish'd

By Mr. COLLIER, &c.

BEFORE I engage the *Argument*, it may not be amiss to premise one Word concerning the *Performance*. This *Author* has rallied the *Old Objections* against the *Absolution* of Sir *William Perkins*, drawn them up in a new Figure, and propos'd them in a Method of Advantage. And to do him justice, in the first part of his Undertaking, He may be said to have done something more. He seems to have reinforced the Bishops *Declaration*, with some *New Observations*, and Reasonings of his own.

His Objections against my Conduct in the *Absolution*, are branched into two general Heads. The one relates to the *Church*, the other to the *State*.

I shall begin with this Gentleman in his own Method.

His first Attempt is to take off the Testimonies of Antiquity, from which I had sufficiently proved that Absolution with *Imposition of Hands*, was the general Practice of the Antient Church. The *Animadverter* grants the Proof of this Point, but disputes the Application. *The Absolution* (says he) *in which those Antients made use of Imposition of Hands, was not such an Absolution as that in* Animad. *which Mr. C — was concern'd: But an Absoluti*
 P. 4, 5. *on of Persons Excommunicated, and given them at their Reconcilement to the Church.*

To disarm this Objection, I shall endeavour to make good three things.

First, That upon the *Animadverter's* own Principles, *Imposition of Hands* could not be confined to the Occasions he mentions, without great Reflection upon the *Antients*.

Secondly, That supposing all my Instances of Antiquity did relate to *Excommunicated Persons*, &c. this does not make them unserviceable to the Purpose they were brought for.

Thirdly, That in Fact, *Absolution*, with *Imposition of Hands*, was given in other Cases besides the *Reconcilement of Offenders*.

1st, That upon the *Animadverter's* Principles, *Imposition of Hands* could not be confin'd to the Occasions he mentions, without great Reflection upon the *Antients*.

The *Animadverter* affirms, That the *Fathers* look'd upon those to whom this Ceremony was applyed, as *deprived of the Holy Ghost*. But that the Antient Church did not always suppose This, will appear, if we consider that, as the *Animadverter* observes, *Imposition of Hands* was given after the Point of *Satisfaction* was adjust'd. This Ceremony in the *Animadverter's* Opinion, was a Ratification of *Articles* between the *Penitent*, and the *Church*. It supposed the *Peace* concluded,

cluded, and gave an Admission to the Priviledges of the former *Allyance*. Now in many cases this *Satisfaction* could not be made without running through a long Course of Pennance, without extraordinary Abstinence, and a great many other Instances of Discipline, and Mortification. They were abridged in almost all the Entertainments and Conveniencies of Life, and passed their Time worse than common Poverty could have used them. Their Habit and Devotions, their Retirement and publick Appearance, were all of them apparent Signs of unusual Severity, and Sorrow, and Submission. And these Exercises of Humiliation were sometimes continued for several Years. A Humiliation, which had admirable effects upon the Christians of those Times. And as the Apostle speaks in a like case; *What Carefullness did it work in them? What clearing of themselves? What Indignation? What Fear? &c.* 2 Cor. vii. 11. And can a Man practise all these Rigours upon himself, and subdue the Powers of Custom, and Inclination, without the Assistance of the *Holy Ghost*? Is it possible to begin Repentance, and carry it on through to many Stages of length and difficulty, by the pure Abilities of Nature? Can a Man practise so many prodigious Instances of Self-denial, and not be under the Conduct of a Divine Influence? This is to deny the necessity of Grace; to make the Soul *autonomous* in Vertue, and to give away the *Antients* to the Heresie of *Pelagius*. 'Tis true, the Antient Church did use *Imposition of Hands* as a Mark of Authority, and a Circumstance of Paternal Benediction: She believ'd without doubt this Application a Recommendation to God's Favour, and that the Communications of his *Spirit* were enlarged upon such an Expedient. This Perswasion is agreeable to the Doctrine and Practise of the *Scriptures*: And upon this view I suppose it is that our Church lays on *her Hands at Ordination*. But as our Church is far from supposing those who appear for *Orders* to be no *true Christians*; So neither did the *Antients* always look upon those they Absolved with *Imposition of Hands*, under such an uncom-

fortable Notion. They could not look upon them as entirely abandoned by Heaven ; or if they had believed them in this unsupported Condition, they would never have deferred their Assistance so long, nor refus'd them the relieving Ceremony, till Penance was over, and *Satisfaction* made, as the *Animadverter* asserts.

2dly, Supposing all my Instances from Antiquity did relate to *Excommunicated Persons*, &c. this does not make them unserviceable to the Purpose for which they were brought.

To take off the force of these Authorities, the *Animadverter* ought to prove, That the Antients forbade *Imposition of Hands*, or at least forbore it, in all other Cases of *Absolution*, besides those above-mentioned: But this he has not in the least attempted. I have sufficiently proved, that giving *Absolution*, with *Imposition of Hands*, was the general Practice of the Primitive Church. Does it not therefore lie upon the *Animadverter* to prove, That this Ceremony was appropriated to the more solemn and publick Cases of *Absolution* by him recited? Ought he not to make good this Point by some Fact or Doctrine, by some Affirmation, or Instance of Antiquity? All the *Precedents* produced are on my side, and many more might be alledged to the same purpose. So that unless the *Animadverter* can show that *Absolution*, in the more ordinary Cases, was generally given without *Imposition of Hands*; and that, in the Opinion of the Antients, the Necessities of *Dying Persons* were reckoned among ordinary Cases: unless he can show this, it must follow in contradiction to what he asserts, That I have the practice of the Primitive Church for my Justification.

If he insists, That the Cases ought to have been proved exactly parallel: To this I answer (at present) that there is no necessity for such a Performance. For we are to observe, That the *Remains* of the Primitive Church, with Relation to *Rites* and *Discipline*, are very imperfect. The

an-

antient *Liturgies* are most of them lost. That little which stands upon Record, was in all likelyhood most remarkable; by which we have reason to believe the more common Instances were regulated. Churches don't use to alter the Solemnities of an *Office* upon every diversity of Occasion. To do this without weighty Considerations, would argue Inconstancy, weaken the Notion of Authority, and introduce Disorder and Neglect. But,

3dly, I shall produce some direct Proofs, That *Absolution*, with *Imposition of Hands*, was given in other Cases besides those of the *Reconcilement of Offenders*.

This Assertion I shall endeavour to make out by three Arguments.

The first, That *Imposition of Hands* was given before *Satisfaction* made to the Church, as well as after.

Secondly, That it was applied to those who were not under *Censure*.

• Thirdly, That *private* Penance was perform'd with the same *Rites* with that which was *publick*.

1st, That *Imposition of Hands* was given before *Satisfaction*, as well as after.

It was used at the beginning of Penance, as a Ceremony of Entrance into that State. To mention some Authorities. *Optatus* will afford us two Instances very full to our Purpose.

*Optat. contr.
Parnen. lib. 1.*

This Father tells us, That the Bishops of the *Donatists* Faction pretended that the *Ordination* of *Cacilian* was null because his *Ordainer Felix* was a *Traditor*. *Cacilian* being willing to stifle the *Schisme* before it became too flagrant, very frankly offers himself to be re-ordained. Upon this *Purpurius*, a *Donatist* Bishop, out of his customary Malice, as *Optatus* observes, breaks out into this Expression: *Let him come*, (says he) *as if he was to receive* Imposition of Hands,

Hands, in order to be made a Bishop, and then we will put him under Pennance with this Ceremony. This Father
 Lib. 2. elsewhere complains of these *Schismaticks*, for parting the Clergy under Pennance, by Imposition of Hands: That herein they contradicted the Practise of the Catholick Church, and inflicted those Punishments upon a lower Pretence, which were not imposed on Bishops, tho' guilty of Idolatry. And here we may see Imposition of Hands was sometimes taken for Pennance, and sometimes for Reconciliation, as the Reader may be informed if he pleases.

That it was given at the beginning of Pennance, may be farther proved from all those *Canons* which forbid Imposition of Hands at the Degradation of the Clergy. And here I might cite several *Councils*; but to avoid length, I shall only produce the 11th Canon of the 5th Council of Carthage: by which 'tis decreed, *That if any Priests or Deacons are convicted of any great Crimes, for which they must be Degraded: Non eis manus tanquam poenitentibus, vel tanquam Fidelibus Laicis imponatur, i. e. Let not Hands be laid on them, either as Penitents, or as Faithful Laicks.* From hence I shall observe two things.

First, That Imposition of Hands was introductive to a Course of Pennance; and not always a Mark of Privilege and Reconciliation, as the *Animadverter* affirms. 'Twas sometimes the Beginning of Discipline and Sorrows, and of Exclusion from Church-Communion. So that the reason why the Canon forbids laying on of Hands upon the Clergy at their Degradation, is, because this Ceremony would have put them under Pennance; and Pennance, besides the rigour of the Discipline, would have barr'd them the Privileges of Communion. Now this would have been punishing twice for one Fault, which was contrary to the Apostles Canons, and the Practise of the Primitive Church. And therefore those Crimes which were Excommunication in the Laity, went no farther than Degradation in the Clergy. The loss of Orders being then reckon'd a Punishment,

nishment, as it were, equivalent to *Excommunication*.

I observe farther from this *Canon*, and bring it as a second Argument for the Point, That *Imposition of Hands* was given to the *Faithful*. Now the *Faithful*, and the *Penitents*, both in the Language of this *Canon*, and in the known sense of Antiquity, are two ranks of Christians contradiſtinguiſh'd, and opposed to each other. They were distinctly placed in the Church, and the first were admitted to the Blessed Sacrament, and to all the Prayers and Advantages of Communion; which the other had not. Now that *Imposition of Hands* usually receiv'd by the *Faithful*, was an *Absolution-Imposition*, and had some *Confessionary* reference, I prove thus in a word. Either this *Imposition*, &c. must relate to *Absolution* or *Confirmation*: To *Confirmation* it cannot, because 'tis prohibited in the *Canon*, by way of Moderation and Abatement of Rigour: But *Confirmation* was always thought a Privilege, not a Punishment. 'Tis plain therefore by the Supposals and Implication of the *Canon*, that *Imposition of Hands* was customarily given to the *Faithful*, that is, to those who were under no *Censure*; and Given them at their *Absolution*, upon their *Confession* of those *Sins*, which were thought too light for *Excommunication*.

3dly, *Private Penance* was perform'd with the same *Rites* with that which was *Publick*.

The difference between these two consisted only in the Abatement of the Solemnity: In some circumstances which were to be perform'd by Assistance: But the Priest's Office was the same in both. By consequence the first must have *Imposition of Hands* no less than the later. Now, private

Morin. de Adm.
Sacr. Penitent.
lib. 9. cap. 31.

Penance was transacted between the Priest, and the *Penitent*, and therefore there could be no precedent *Excommunication*, to make way for such a *Reconcilement*, as the
Ani-

Animadverter supposes: I say, there could be no *precedent* Excommunication; for such a *Censure* does not use to be made a Secret, but passed in the Face of the Congregation. Indeed, without publick notice the Censure could not be executed; the *Excommunicated* Person could not be treated with that Distance, nor refused in Church-Correspondence, as the Punishment required.

De Pœnit.

The Learned *Morinus* above-mention'd, cites li. 8. ca. 15. *Marianus Victorius*, to prove, that no one was absolved without *Imposition of Hands*. And for this, *Marianus* quotes a Synod under *Charles* the Great. And in his Book *de Pœnitentiis publicis*, He affirms, That every Absolution consisted of two things, i. e. *Imposition of Hands*, and Prayer. That this *Imposition of Hands* was twofold, Publick and Private. That is called Publick, which is publickly perform'd in the Church before the Congregation. That is called Private, which is given at Home, or at any private place. *Morinus* brings several other Authorities to the same purpose.

And thus the *Animadverter* may please to take notice, that *Imposition of Hands* in Absolution, was practis'd in other Cases besides those which relate to the publick Reconcilement of Offenders.

The *Animadverter* goes on, and endeavours to shew, that the Plea of *Antiquity*, tho' never so well furnish'd with resembling Cases, will not justify my Proceedings in Absolving with *Imposition of Hands*. (*Animad.* pag. 6.) His Reasoning stands upon this Ground. That *Rites and Ceremonies* are not unalterable in their own nature, but are liable to be chang'd or abolish'd, as Circumstances require, at the discretion of every Particular or National Church. For this he cites *Tertullian*, and the 34th Article of our own Church. I grant the *Animadverter* all this; but which way 'twill affect me, is not so easie to determine. I never asserted the Necessity of *Imposition of Hands*, or that Absolution was imperfect without it: Neither does my

my Practise suppose any such thing. Well! But *this Ceremony is not retain'd in the Church of England; and therefore the Practise of the African Church, tho' never so Primitive, is no sufficient Warrant; — For good Order and Uniformity require, that Particular Ministers should not make use of any Ceremonies, but what the Church and Law amongst us prescribe.* (Animad. p. 7, 8.)

In answer to this, I can't help taking notice of his saying, that a *Minister of the Church of England is not to govern himself by the Church of Carthage, &c.* This Sentence looks somewhat artificial, and seems design'd to mislead the Reader into a Belief, That *Imposition of Hands in Absolution*, was only the Custom of St. Cyprian's Jurisdiction, or at most of the *African Church*. Whereas he may please to remember, I proved the Practise *General*, and could have cited many more Testimonies had it been necessary. His affirming that *Imposition of Hands* is not retained in the Church of *England*, will not hold generally speaking. For this Ceremony is retained both in *Orders*, and *Confirmation*; which is a sufficient Argument of its being approved by the Church. But the Church does not retain it in her *Absolutions*. I grant 'tis not in the *Rubrick* for that purpose. And therefore had it been used at the *Daily Service*, or upon any *Solemn Occasion* regulated by the Church, there might have been some pretence for Exception: But the *Rubrick* and *Act of Uniformity* mentioned by the *Animadverter*, provide only against *Innovation* in stated, and *publick Administrations*. 'Tis in *Churches*, and *Church-Appointments*, that the *Rubrick* condemns *adding or diminishing*. But this is none of the present case. For the Church has not prescrib'd us any *Office* for *Executions*. Every Priest is here left to his Liberty, both as to *Office* and *Gesture*, to *Substance* and *Ceremony*. The Devotion may be all private Composition if the Confessor pleases. And when out of respect to the Church, he selects any part of her *Liturgy*, tho' the Form is publick, the Choice and Occasion are private, which makes it fall under another

ther Denomination. The selected *Office* in this case, is like Coyn melted into Bullion. The publick Impression is gone; and with that, the Forfeitures for Clipping, and Alloy, are gone too; and the honest Proprietor may add to the Quantity, or alter the Figure as he thinks fit. I confess, had the Church excepted against *Imposition of Hands* in Absolution; Had she condemn'd the *Ceremony* thus applyed, and laid a *General Prohibition* upon it; her Members ought to govern themselves accordingly, and not to use it so much as in private: But since the Church prescribes this *Rite* in her *Rubrick*, and takes notice of it only by way of Practise and Approbation: When Matters stand thus I say, her *Non-prohibition* implies *Allowance* in private Ministrations; and in cases no ways determined by her self. For pray what is Liberty, but the Absence of Command, the Silence of Authority, and leaving things in their natural Indifference? Thus the Point was understood, and practised by the famous Bishop *Sanderson*, upon one of the most Solemn Occasions, and in which himself was most nearly concern'd. This eminent Casuist about a Day before his Death, desired his Chaplain Mr. Pullin, to give him Absolution: And at his performing that Office, he pull'd off his Cap, that Mr. Pullin might lay his Hand upon his bare Head. The *Animadverter* therefore had no reason to spend two Pages against me, as if I left too much to the Direction of the Inferiour Clergy, and paid too slender a regard to the *Bishops*. Did this Gentleman expect I should apply for Advice to the Bishops who set forth the late *Declaration*? He could not imagine this, if he considered what he had said himself, *Pag. 17*. If I consulted the *Heads* of my own Communion, I hope 'twas sufficient. But supposing I did not trouble any of our *dispossessed Holy Fathers* with this Matter, where was the harm on't? Had I not both *Antient* and *Modern* Precedents to direct me? Had I not the Authority of the celebrated Bishop *Sanderson*? Pray is the Priest obliged to consult the Bishops for Directions at
an

Walton's Life of Bishop Sanderson, p. 49. Fol. Edit.
Animad. p. 11, 12.

an *Execution*? Does the Church either in her *Rubrick*, or *Canons*, require such an Application? Nothing of this can be pretended. And since this Point is left to the Discretion of the Priest, and there are no stated *Ceremonies* prescrib'd, nor any *Liturgical* Forms to govern the *Office*; where lies the Offence of having recourse to *Primitive* Usage? Why may not the Confessor officiate with an antient *Gesture* (practis'd in other cases by his own Church;) as well as draw up a private *Office*, or make use of an extemporary Prayer? What reason can be assign'd why there should be less of liberty in the former, than in the latter Case? 'Tis well known the Regulation of the *Penitents* Conscience is left wholly to the *Priest's* Conduct, both in *Prison*, and at the place of *Execution*. The Church interposes in no respect. Advice, and Discipline, and Devotion, lie all at discretion. Now the Success of the Administration depends much more upon the management of these Points, than upon any Latitudes of *Gesture*. And since the weightier Circumstances go at large, and are resign'd up to Trust, and Prudence, by what reasoning can we put a restraint upon the lesser? The truth is, the Church determines nothing in the case; and where there is no Law, there can be no *Transgression*. If'tis said the general Law of *Decency* is to be regarded: I grant it; and affirm that this Rule was very well observ'd. For the *Animadverter* cannot deny that *Imposition of Hands* in *Absolution*, is a significant, solemn, and antient Ceremony. Besides, had there been any thing exceptionable in point of *Decency*, it could amount to no more than a Defect in Conduct, and a Mismanagement of Liberty. But as for any Crime, or Disobedience to *Church-Authority*, it can never be fairly swell'd to such an *Aggravation*; because there was no breach made in any publick *Order* or Constitution. I don't mention this, as if the Practice needed an Excuse, but only to shew the Right to such a Plea, if there had been occasion.

The *Animadverter* proceeds in his *Articles* of Impeachment, and objects, That 'tis against the *Practise* of the Church in general, and against our own *Rubrick* in particular, to Absolve or assist in the Absolution of a Person, whose Confession and Repentance are known no otherwise than by the Testimony of others. *Animad. p. 8.* The first part of this Charge is only bare Affirmation, and that which brings no proof, needs no confuting: But it may be the second Attack will be better maintain'd. Here he tells us, That by the *Rubrick* in the Visitation, &c. special Confession of Sins is required, and after that, the Priests Absolution is to follow. This is all true, but I think little to his purpose. The Church advises Confession should precede Absolution: She does so, and with good reason. And here was a previous Confession in the Instance debated. Which way then does my Practise clash with the Directions of the *Rubrick*? The Church for the right Application of the *Keys*, makes Confession to the Priest the Condition of Absolution. But does she oblige the Penitent to confess to more than one? Does she make the Office of Absolution single and solitary, or forbid the Concurrence of a plurality of Presbyters? Of Presbyters invited to an Assistance by the Confessor, and informed with general satisfaction at the first hand? However; Silence it seems is a perpetual Equivalent to Prohibition, and that which is never so much as mention'd is always condemned! This is extraordinary arguing! Under favour, we may much better collect the sense of the *Rubrick* by the Practise of resembling Cases. And here I alledg'd both the Antient, and our own Church in my Defence. My Instance from the Antient Church, was a general Custom of admitting Strangers to Communion, by Vertue of a Certificate given by the Bishop from whence they came. To this the *Animadverter* makes two Exceptions.

First,

First, He thinks the Proofs insufficient, because they are not particular to the Business of *Absolution*. Suppose they are not: If the Resemblance holds, the Proofs will do so too. Parallel Cases, and proportion of Inference, uses to be thought good arguing. It stands upon this plain Ground: That all Conclusions regularly drawn from a Principle, are equally certain. And that when two Actions have the same Reasons to plead, they must be equally defensible. To apply this Reasoning. Admittance to *Communion*, includes admittance to *Absolution*: And since I made it appear the Antients did the first upon the Testimony of others, there was no need of any distinct proof for the latter. Those who were received to *Communion* had all the Privileges of Church-Society. They were admitted to the Blessed Sacrament, which was always counted one of the highest, and most intimate Acts of Communion. Of this the *Animadverter* may inform himself if he pleases to consult my *Albaspinaus*. Now since the Bishop's Letter gave Strangers a Right to all these Privileges, it gave them by consequence a Right to *Absolution*; If *Absolution* was made preparatory to the Sacrament, and given in other cases besides the Relaxation of *Censures*, which I suppose by this time the *Animadverter* will not deny. However,

Secondly, He is loath to grant the Instances Parallel. Why so? Because the Antients never gave Certificates to such as were not personally known to them, or whose Case they were not privy to. (*Animad. p. 9.*) And what follows? Why that the *Animadverter* has lost himself. I beseech him was not Sir William Perkins personally known to me, and was I not acquainted with his Case? Did not Sir J. Friend stand in the same Circumstances of Intimacy with Mr. Snatt and Mr. Cook? And if so, why might not the Testimonials be interchangeably given, and the Penitents receiv'd to reciprocal *Absolution*? He must not say that our being no more than Priests, unqualified us for this Privilege. An Episcopal Character is not always necessary for Recommendation.

on. The *Animadverter* himself observes, That our *Laws and Canons require, That the Person to be Ordain'd should be recommended by some approved Presbyters.* So that notwithstanding my improvement of his Argument, my Instance from Antiquity remains parallel to the Case in hand, and stands in full force against him. Farther. That some of the highest Functions of the Clergy might be discharg'd upon Confidence and Recommendation, I proved from our own *Ordination-Office* : This he is pleas'd to call a *groß mistake* ; tho' no Sunshine can be clearer than the Evidence of what I affirm'd, as the *Reader* may see by perusing the *Office*. Nay, the *Animadverter* is so unlucky as to confess thus much in his very Endeavours of Disproof.

Page 9.

He tells you, That *Orders amongst us are never confer'd upon such as are not personally known.* Pray by whom must they be personally known? By the Clergy who give them their Testimonials, and by the Arch-Deacon too as far as Enquiry and Examination. But

Animad.
p. 10.

what is all this to the Point? Here is no contradiction to any Assertion of mine ; nor any thing that condemns my Practice. To put the Question home. Is the Bishop, or the Clergy assisting at the Ordination, bound to immediate knowledge of the Life, or sufficiency of the Person Ordain'd? This I deny : And unless the *Animadverter* can prove the *Affirmative*, he says nothing. But here he is silent, and when he does speak, 'tis against himself. The *Arch-Deacon* (says he) is to enquire of the Candidate's Qualifications, and to declare publickly to the Bishop, That he believes the Person presented, apt and meet for the Ministry. Now I would gladly understand, why the *Arch-Deacon* should tell the Bishop all this, if he knew it before? Information always supposes Ignorance in the Person inform'd, or at least that 'tis lawful for him to be so. To acquaint the Bishop with what he was bound to know by immediate Tryal, and Experiment, would be extremely untoward. The Church don't use to trifle at this rate in

her

her solemn Offices. In short, the Functions of the *Arch-Deacon* are Demonstrations, that the *Ordainers* are not obliged to personal Knowledge of the *Ordained*. This is so plain, that I'm amaz'd the *Animadverter* shou'd venture upon Contradiction, and entangle himself so unhappily in the Argument. Sure this Gentleman presumes very much upon the Favour, and implicit weakness of the Reader, otherwise he would never dispute in this manner! The *Animadverter* fortifies himself, and adds, That *there was no Necessity for this manner of Absolution*: For if the *Confessary* had given it without any Assistant it had ^{Ibid.} been sufficient. This Argument stands upon a false Bottom, and supposes nothing lawful but what is necessary, than which nothing can be a greater Mistake. 'Tis true, what is not necessary may be omitted, but it does not therefore follow that it *must*. Religion, and common Life would make but a lean Appearance, were they stinted to the Allowance of Necessity. But there needs to be no more said about this matter. A

3d Thing which the *Animadverter* fancies to be irregular, is the pronouncing Absolution in publick, when there was not any publick Confession. I am surprized the *Animadverter* should object this to me: Have I not told him I was deny'd the Liberty of visiting Sir *William Perkins* for two or three of the last Days, and that he desired to receive Absolution at my Hands? I'm sorry he forces me upon the Repetition of these Things. Farther. As to Sir *William's* being privy to the intended Assassination, there was both publick Confession and Repentance too, if he will believe the Committee. And for this Point I refer him to the Votes of Apr. 2d, and to what I have observed upon them, in my Reply to the Absolution of a Penitent, &c. This is a sufficient Answer to what is objected. But because the *Animadverter* is so tragical and triumphant in this Paragraph, and charges me with unheard of Singularity; I shall observe to him in the

the 3d place, That *Absolution* was sometimes *publick* among the Antients when *Confession* was *private*. I have already proved, That *Absolution* was frequently given at the *beginning* of *Penance*, and the *Animadverter* grants it at the *end* of it. The proving therefore *publick* *Penance* assign'd to *private* *Confession*, proves *Absolution* was *publick*, tho' *Confession* was not so. Because without *Absolution*, *Penance* could not be regularly compleated, nor the Person restored to the Peace of the Church. Now that those who confessed *privately* were order'd to do *open* *Penance*, without being obliged to *publish* their particular *Miscarriages*, appears from the 34th Canon of St. Basil to *Amphilochius*. *Adulterio pollutas Mulieres & confitentes ob pietatem — Publicare quidem patres nostri prohibuerunt, eas autem Stare sine Communionem iusserunt donec impleretur Tempus Penitentiae.* And from the 58th Canon of this *Father* 'tis plain, that these Women were dispensed with in the three first Stages of *Penance*. They were excused the Discipline of the *Fientes*, *Audientes*, and *Substrati*, and immediately ranged

among the *Confitentes* to prevent the Discovery of their Crime. Farther. 'Tis well

known that before the time of *Nectarius* Bishop of *Constantinople*, publick *Penance* was used in the *Eastern* Church, as well as in the *Western*. For the better regulation of this

Discipline there was a Person chosen to inspect the State of the *Penitents*, and receive their *Confessions*. To this Office *Sozomen* tells us 'twas customary to appoint some Priest eminent for

his Prudence and regular Behaviour; but especially one who was remarkable for his *Secrecy*. Now to what purpose should this last Qualification be thought so necessary in a *Penitentiary*, if *Confessions* were not deliver'd as *Secrets*, and kept so too? And accordingly we find that

Person of *Quality*, who occasioned the Change of Discipline in the Church of *Constantinople*, Confess'd to none but the Priest, tho' she was at the same time openly *Penitent*.

For

For tho' *Confessions* were private, yet *Penance* was then publick, and by consequence *Absolution* too.

The *Animadverter* objects in the

4th Place; That *their concurring all three together in the Absolution, cannot be sufficiently excused*. Why so? I had given him several Reasons why it needed no excuse. Upon what account are they all passed over? If they are defective, he should have shown it. The *Animadverter* grants that this *joynt Absolution, perhaps carries nothing of ill with it*. How comes it about then to be no small *Presumption*, as he calls it? Is it so great a *Presumption* to do that which carries nothing of ill in't? Yes. In some Peoples Opinion a greater than the contrary. But the *Presumption* lies, it may be, in *pretending to do a thing so unusual in the Church, without any Church-Rule, &c.* I have already shown this Practice not to be unusual, and justified it from *Precedents* of Antiquity, and *Parallel Cases* in our own Church; and till the *Animadverter* can answer what I have brought, I think he *presumes* too far in making his Exceptions. As for any direct *Precedent* at home, there is no necessity for that. 'Tis true, we officiated as Priests of the *Church of England*; but we were not tyed up to any *Liturgick Rites*, nor acted under any *Church-Rule*. The Office was private, and left at liberty. In such Circumstances, *Parallel Reasonings* and *Warrants* from Primitive Practice, are sufficient Justifications. Where Matters are *undetermined* by Authority, nothing but *Opposition* can make a Fault: In these cases, *he that is not against the Church, is for Her*. All this while I argue only for my self, tho' if any thing I have offer'd proves serviceable to Mr. *Snatt*, and Mr. *Cook*, I am glad of it. However I can't help thinking the *Animadverter* unfair in saying, I *speak for the rest*: Since I have fully declared the contrary; and publish'd an *AdVERTISEMENT* on purpose to prevent all possibility of mistake.

Page 11.

Ibid.

P. 27.

Vid. 2.
Defence.

At last the *Animadverter* objects, That I combat
 an Adversary of my own making. It seems
 then, that I have proved more than was necessary,
 and over-defended my self. Best of all ! I
 had rather do so, than fall short. But I mistook the Bi-
 shop's *Declaration*. For they never denied that the laying on of
 Hands was oftentimes used by the Antients in *Absolu-
 tion* : But they understood, (I presume.) And
 thus he presumes, and conjectures the Sense of these Re-
 verend Prelates for a Page together : And writes more upon
 their *Thoughts*, than their *Declaration*. But the *Animadver-
 ter* does but *presume* all this while. I'm glad to find he is
 not *positive*. A *Parenthesis* of Conscience, is better than
 none at all. However ; with this Gentleman's Favour, I
 had reason to prove the *Absolution* unexceptionable, both
 with respect to *Imposition of Hands*, and the other Circum-
 stances mentioned in my *Defence*. For the Bishops were
 pleased to make a kind of general Assault, so that 'twas ne-
 cessary to guard at all Quarters. And that I did not defend
 my self without an *Aggressor*, will appear by considering
 the *Declaration*. Here, these Reverend Prelates condemn
 the *Absolution* upon two accounts. They are pleased to
 say, 'Twas both irregular in the Thing, and insolent in the Man-
 ner ; without Precedent either in our Church, or any
 other that we know of. To be clear. What is the
 Thing ? The Thing, is the Absolving Sir William, and
 Sir John, precisely and irrespectively consider'd, without
 relation to Place, Ceremony, or Words. This I have dis-
 patch'd elsewhere, and so I shall leave it. But what is the
 Manner ? The *Declaration* will tell you. 'Tis Absolving at
 the place of Execution ; by laying all three their
 Hands upon their Heads, and publickly pronoun-
 cing a Form of *Absolution*. The *Imposition of Hands*, the
 joyn't *Absolution*, the publick pronouncing a Form, are all
 Branches of the Manner, in the Bishop's Description. This,
 these

Animad.
 p. 13, 14.

Ibid.

Declar. p. 7.

Declar. p. 6.

these *Reverend Prelates* are pleas'd to condemn without Restriction of Censure, Distinction of Case, or Particularity of Circumstance. Had I not reason then to suppose their Exception *general*, and defend the *whole*? With submission, why was *Imposition of Hands* censured in the gross, if it was not altogether disliked, or thought at least too much for any Churchman, but a Bishop? And as for the *Form*; if it was not a Fault, why does it appear in ill Company? Why is it brought to the *Bar*, and placed among other exceptionable Circumstances? It wears a suspected Livery, and stands with the *Articles* of Accusation, without any mark of Innocence, or Distinction. Yet after all. To do these *Reverend Prelates* justice, I don't think them averse to a *Form* of *Absolution*; neither did I affirm it. I said no more than that 'twas mention'd with *seeming Coldness*, and *Abatements of Expression*: And with submission, so I say still; and the wording of the *Declaration* proves it. So that this Remark of mine has neither *Disingenuity*, nor *false Accusation* in't, as the *Animadverter* pretends. 'Tis only a gentle *Reprizal* on the *Declaration* when it lay fair. And this I perswade my self the *Reverend Prelates* will not take amiss, if they please to reflect on the unexpected Language I had been treated with.

The *Animadverter* is now come to the
 2d Branch of his first Division, and considers *Page 15.*
 the *Absolution* with relation to the *State*. And
 here he makes the Countenance of a very obliging Person.
He is sure he does not hate me. He would rather
excuse, than aggravate my Crime, as he phrases *Page 18.*
 it. Nay, for once, to be courteous, *He will even force*
himself against his Reason. What can be more Tender and
 Melting, than such Expressions as these? What! Deny his
 Judgment out of Good Nature, and be Civil against
 Sense, and Reason? Who could desire a Friend to go far-
 C 2 ther?

ther? And can you imagine a Gentleman of all this Ceremony should charge me with *impertinent Allegations*, pronounce me guilty of a *daring piece of Insolence*; call me a *new-fashion'd Guide*, and that *I am nearest of Kin to a Church beyond the four Seas*, which without doubt is some terrible one, if there be not more of them. But this is not all. He makes me an Abettor of *Assassinations*, and prays *God I may be the last Confessary that may trouble the World in this kind*: And lastly, endeavours to menace my Brethren of the Clergy, into a *Protestation against my Proceedings*: Which if they refuse to make, it seems they must not be

Page 7, 16,
22, 22.

allow'd to have any *Honour, Conscience*, or *Protection* either, if he can help it. Here is stark Love and Kindness for you! Was ever any Treatment more engaging, or good Humour set off with better advantage? This is the gentle

Page 16.

Animadverter, who does not love to use hard words, who hates it in others, &c! This Gentleman puts me in mind of the * *Maid of Presbourg*, who makes you a very decent Honour, and is strangely Careless in her Gesture, when she is just going to dispatch you. 'Tis well the

* An Engine for
Executions, in
the Figure of a
Woman.

Animadverter has not Force for such a Complement, for he has shown his *Inclination* enough in all Conscience. But the best on't is, the Cause has made him kinder in his Reasoning, than in his Language. To engage him a little farther. He fancies the *Absolution* was intended to

Page 17.

be publick. How does the *Animadverter* make out this? Because I had inform'd him that Mr. Ashton was publickly Absolved at the same place, and in the same manner; and as he adds, by a *Non-jurant Minister*. Granting all this, what follows? It seems it follows, That he that seriously considers this, will be very apt to believe that it was the Resolution of the *Non-jurant Clergy* to Absolve their Friends in that manner. Some People are very apt to believe, and to say too, more than is necessary: And 'tis not always either Evidence,

vidence, or good Nature that makes them so forward. Mr. *Asbron* was publickly Absolved by a *Non-jurant* Clergy-man, therefore all the Clergy of that Perswasion, have concerted a Resolution to Absolve their Friends in that manner! Where is the Consequence of this? *One* did it *once*, therefore *all* must do it *always*! Are all these *Non-jurant* Churchmen of a Mind in every thing? Are they so much resign'd to any single Authority, or so unalterably bound up to *Precedent*, as not to leave themselves a *Latitude* for Time and Occasion? Such lame Conjectures as these, raised into Accusation, are no generous Indications. He that charges so high as the *Animadverter*, certainly ought to prove his point a little more home. The *Animadverter* asks me, *Why I will not reveal any part of the Confession?* I conceive he might have given himself Pag. 19. an Answer. I had told him, I was not obliged to reveal it; and what I was not obliged to reveal, the *Canon* obliged me not to reveal. Had I done otherwise, I had been pronounced *Irregular*, been false to Trust, and Confidence; betray'd and discouraged *Confession*: I had been guilty of a Practise both dishonourable, and unconscientious, and deeply censured by *Antiquity*, as well as our *own Church*. This Plea, *had it any thing to support it*, the *Animadverter* owns would be the best Argument. Page 21. He means, I suppose, 'twould be a good one, and justify the whole Practise. And which way does he prove it unsupported? Why, he wonders at it, and makes a strong Appeal, and asks a foreign Question or two, and falls into a fit of Satyr, and so takes his leave: But as for engaging the main difficulty, and proving the Case *exempted* by the *Canon*, he desires your Excuse. This is the *Animadverter's* gentle way of confuting the *best Argument*; and you may guess at the reason of his *Civility*. And, tho' the *Animadverter* has not answer'd what I offer'd in my two first *Papers*; yet if he pleases to see this matter treated more at large, he may consult my *Reply to the Absolution of a Penitent*,

nitent, &c. Which, tho' written before, was published some few Days after his *Animadversions*. The *Animadverter* is offended, because we did not conceal the *Ab-*
Page 23. *solution from the People*. How could that be at a publick *Execution*? Would he have had us *Whisper'd* over the *Office*, as if it had been *Treason*, as 'twas in *Daniel's* Time, to pray to *GOD Almighty*? Had this Method been taken, the Charity of some of the Audience might have said we had *mutter'd* a *Charm*, or at least, made use of a Form of *that Church on the other side the four Seas*.

But we were to blame for letting all the *Hearers*
Ibid. *know it to be an Absolution*. That's strange! He supposes the People to *hear* the Form pronounc'd, and yet they must not *understand* it! I perceive the *Animadverter* is for *Prayers* in an *unknown Language*, otherwise his Expedient is impracticable. After all; why so *private* in a solemn and warrantable Action? Why should Innocence and Regularity be *afraid* of *Notice* and *Observation*? I have shown the Office in all respects defensible: And had no reason when I was in a *publick* place, to perform it in a *con-*
Ibid. *scious and clancular manner*. But by pronouncing *the Absolution, we look'd upon the Fact as no Sin*:

Just on the contrary. He may be assured if we had not believ'd some *Facts* of those Gentlemen to have been *sins*, we had never *Absolv'd* them. For Innocence stands in no need of Forgiveness. But what these *Facts* were, I can never tell him. He insists farther; That if *Sir William died a Penitent, and I Absolv'd him as such, then surely*

Sir William did express his Repentance for being
Page 27. *concern'd in the intended Assassination*. I have fully satisfisd this point in my *Reply*, &c. and thither I refer the *Animadverter*. There the Reader also may see his *State-Objections* answer'd more at large; my Adversary in that *Paper* having propos'd the chief of them before.

And

And by this time, I suppose, the *Animadver-* Pag. 25.
ter's Harangue may be inoffensive, and the edge
 of his Satyr rebated. He may now, take down his Tri-
 umphal Arch, recant his Censures, and recal his
Protestation. And if I might advise him, as he Pag. 23.
 has done the Clergy ; It should be to exert him-
 self with more Temper and Caution : And for his own
 sake at least, to keep *Zeal* and *Justice*, *Passion* and *Consci-*
ence, somewhat better proportion'd.

July 15th.
 1696.

F. C.

F I N I S.